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MYRON H. SWENK,  
Secretary-Treasurer N. O. U.

**PUBLICATIONS REVIEWED**

REICHENOW'S VOGEL, VOL. II.

(A Review.)

Having reviewed the first volume of this work in the pages of the Bulletin some time ago the reviewer had hoped to finish his task soon after that, but the second volume was held back in Liverpool, England, for more than a year, evidently as contraband or for fear it might contain a bomb or picric acid, or what not. But at last it has arrived and we are now able to finish the review. Since the essential points of Reichenow's classification have been disposed of in the previous review, there is no need to go over them again. The second volume begins with the second half of the fifth row *Fibulatores*, the *Musophagidæ*, Cuckoos, Woodpeckers, etc., and then takes up the last row the *Arboricolæ*, running from the *Bucerotidæ* to the Nightingale. Some of the families seem a little out of place in this system as it stands, for instance the *Pycnonotidæ* should certainly have been placed nearer to the *Turdidæ* than they are placed in the work.

The work at large fills a great want and has many points to commend it. The reviewer has tried to do justice to it in every way, although personally we prefer a phylogenetic system, and if there is anything better than that which Ridgway has produced we have failed to see it. And even then one is sometimes inclined to wonder whether some time in the future, as Dr. Gill suggested in the Osprey some years since, there will not be a system that will take a still different viewpoint and arrive at still different conclusions. For instance the *Fringillidæ* and *Tanagridæ*, both nine primaried conirostral birds are separated really only by relative points of difference—as are the *Corvidæ* and *Paridæ*,—while the *Ploceidæ* are certainly conirostral, as anyone may see who will place specimens of *Pyrenestes albifrons* and *Hesperiphona vespertina* side by side, but have 10 primaries, and again the *Icteridæ* are nineprimaried conirostral birds, which in

turn seem to be connected with the 10 primaried *Sturnidæ* through the nineprimaried form *Paramythia montium* from New Guinea. One feels like creating a Superfamily of all the conirostral Oscines, separating them into nineprimaried and tenprimaried subfamilies, taking into consideration and emphasizing the points they have in common more than the points of differentiation. We remember that in our boyhood days in our parochial school in Missouri we were taught out of some ancient German Natural History that the Songbirds were divided into 6 families: dentirostral, conirostral, fissirostral, pegbilled, thinbilled birds and the *Corvidæ*, and are we after all so very far removed from these viewpoints in these days of modern classification? However, it behooves us to strive for the truth and for accuracy in science to the best of *our* ability and *our* understanding and we do *well* if we do *this*, no matter what our name may be.

As far as the treatment of North and Middle American birds is concerned we understand Dr. Reichenow when he says it would be impossible to treat all the forms, still some omissions and errors could have been avoided. The placing of *Myiadestes* and *Bombycilla* among the *Muscicapidæ* might be forgiven, but not the placing of certain *Tanagerforms* among the *Mniotiltidæ* and to put *Vireosylva* in the same family is nonsense! Among the *Tyrannidæ* the Genus *Empidonax* should have come in for at least 10 to 20 lines and similar remarks hold true in other cases, as for instance, the *Troglodytinæ*. The whole *Sylviidæ* group of Dr. Reichenow is rather an unfortunate one anyhow. The description of *Oporornis formosa* is wrong and could only apply to the female of the Wilson's Warbler. The name of the Chat must read *Icteria virens* and so we might go on and find more errors. But all these minor errors will not detract from the value of the work, which certainly is what it set out to be a "Handbook" a handy manual. That we find such errors and misstatements in regard to North American birds is due to the fact that in the Berlin Museum and practically all the German Museums our birds are but poorly represented and I can show the proof for this statement in writing from the hands of the Dir, of the Royal Zoölogical Museum. Hence we must bear with them in a spirit of kindness and hope that these conditions will improve so that in the future we Americans can receive our just dues.

W. F. H.

THE WINTER BIRD LIFE OF MINNESOTA. By Thomas S. Roberts. Fins-Feathers and Fur. Official Bulletin of the Minnesota Game and Fish Department. No. 4. December, 1915.

This is the title of a very complete list of the birds which have